

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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*[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]*

DEAR EDITOR: Two years ago, before the organization of the New York State Association, much time and energy was spent discussing the merits of individual membership *versus* membership consisting of delegates from already existing organizations. The interest and active support of each individual nurse was needed, but in discussing this point with an officer of the Associated Alumnae she pointed out that a State organization of individual membership would be cumbersome. I suggested that this objection could be removed by having the State association composed of local organizations in the different counties, the local or county organizations being branches of the State association and represented therein by delegates. In order that the nurses of every locality should be fairly represented at the annual conventions each county organization should be entitled to one delegate and alternate for, say, every fifty members of such county organization to represent them at the annual meeting of the State association. They should be entitled to vote by proxy before the annual meeting and cast a number of votes corresponding to the number of members of their county organization. This proposition was disapproved on the ground that there were already enough nurses' organizations in the field and no advantage would be gained by adding to them.

Nevertheless, the county association has been inaugurated. The county association will be composed entirely of registered nurses. The by-laws of the State association on the subject of membership, which are fearfully and wonderfully made, provide for a dual membership, individual membership, and delegates from local organizations. The first are required to be registered. There is no such provision with regard to the second. Under the existing by-laws membership in the State organization is independent of the county association. The by-laws concerning admission to membership in the State association should be equally applicable to the county association and vice versa, barring only the limitation of locality. Then why not do away entirely with the remarkable labyrinth of words constituting the present by-laws of the State association on the subject of membership, and instead have the county associations composed of individual registered nurses regardless of distinction of schools, and the State association composed wholly and entirely of delegates from the county associations, as stated before in this letter, also in my letter to THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING in January, 1902. To admit delegates from nursing organizations, such as alumnae societies, only adds an unnecessary complication, as such societies are not likely to be composed only of registered nurses unless some very radical reorganization takes place, also members of such societies may prefer to join as individuals.

Alumnae associations are all right in their place,—they have their own sphere of work,—but I am convinced that both the State and the county associa-

tion would be much broader and stronger organizations if such school distinction be eliminated.

B. VAN HOMRIGH STEVENSON,

February 10. 823 Park Avenue, New York City.

[As long ago as May, 1902, the JOURNAL commented upon the need in New York City of a "strong local organization that should bring the nurses of all schools into working and 'playing' relations." This comment called forth something of a protest in the next issue from a "Resident of New York," in which, however, she outlined a plan for an organization in the future, then being considered, by which an affiliation of all the existing societies in the vicinity would be secured upon practically the lines on which the county society has now been established. We believe the county society a great step in the right direction for New York City.

Of course, we all know the by-laws of the State society are clumsily made, but by degrees they can and will be put into better and more comprehensive form, but inasmuch as the State society, even with its faulty organization, has been recognized by the Legislature and given a voice in the educational affairs of the State, we feel that radical changes should be made slowly and with great care. The alumnae associations have been the educators in organization work, and we question whether their days of usefulness are yet over. We would advise very deliberate action in all matters pertaining to the State society, that New York may keep unchallenged the splendid position she now holds in the registration movement.—ED.]

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TOLEDO, O., February 13, 1904.

DEAR EDITOR: The article, "Does the Training-School do its Full Duty?" by Susan Bard Johnson, "just hits the nail on the head" in my opinion. By far the most general criticism I hear of the private nurse is, "She understands her business, but I don't like her." I think we all agree that deliberation is one of the most important qualifications for a nurse; then why sacrifice it for routine work, more of which might be done by maids? Training-schools cannot afford to teach housekeeping, which should be an important qualification for the probationer.

MARY I. HARROUN,  
Private Nurse.

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[LETTERS to the Editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—ED.]



THE TREATMENT OF CONSTIPATION IN INFANTS.—The *Medical Record* says: "Clamann treats constipation in infants by introducing a well-oiled soft-rubber catheter several inches into the rectum. If necessary, it may then be moved in and out several times, but usually its mere presence is sufficient to excite active peristalsis. The method may be used for weeks, the only consideration being that the diet is suitable and the motor activity of the gut sufficient."